

THE GOSPEL CALLED, THE  
PROTEVANGELION

*This Gospel is ascribed to James. The allusions to it in the ancient Fathers are frequent, and their expressions indicate that it had obtained a very general credit in the Christian world. The controversies founded upon it chiefly relate to the age of Joseph at the birth of Christ, and to his being a widower with children, before his marriage with the Virgin. It seems material to remark, that the legends of the latter ages affirm the virginity of Joseph, notwithstanding Epiphanius, Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyril, Euthymius, Theophylact, Occumenius, and indeed all the Latin Fathers till Ambrose, and the Greek Fathers afterwards, maintain the opinions of Joseph's age and family, founded upon their belief in the authenticity of this book. It is supposed to have been originally composed in Hebrew. Postellus brought the MS. of this Gospel from the Levant, translated it into Latin, and sent it to Oporimus, a printer at Basil, where Bibliander, a Protestant Divine, and the Professor of Divinity at Zurich, caused it to be printed in 1552. Postellus asserts that it was publicly read as canonical in the eastern churches they making no doubt that James was the author, of it. It is, nevertheless considered apocryphal by some of the most learned divines in the Protestant and Catholic churches.*

*Or, an Historical Account of the BIRTH of CHRIST, and the perpetual VIRGIN MARY, his Mother, by JAMES THE LESSER, Cousin and Brother of the Lord Jesus, chief Apostle and first Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem.*

CHAPTER I.

*1 Joachim, a rich man, 2 offers to the Lord, 3 is opposed by Reuben the high priest, because he has not begotten issue in Israel, 6 retires into the wilderness and fasts forty days and forty nights.*

IN the history of the twelve tribes of Israel we read there was a certain person called Joachim, who being very rich, made double offerings to the Lord God, having made this resolution: My substance shall be for the benefit of the whole people, that I may find mercy from the Lord God for the forgiveness of my sins.

2 But at a certain great feast of the Lord, when the children of Israel offered their gifts, and Joachim also offered his, Reuben the high-priest opposed him, saying, it is not lawful for thee to offer thy gifts, seeing

thou hast not begot any issue in Israel.

3 At this, Joachim being concerned very much, went away to consult the registries of the twelve tribes, to see whether he was the only person who had begot no issue.

4 But upon inquiry he found that all the righteous had raised up seed in Israel;

5 Then he called to mind the patriarch Abraham, How that God in the end of his life had given him his son Isaac; upon which he was exceedingly distressed, and would not be seen by his wife:

6 But retired into the wilderness, and fixed his tent there, and fasted forty days and forty nights, saying to himself,

7 I will not go down either to eat or drink, till the Lord my God shall look down upon me, but prayer shall be my meat and drink.

CHAPTER. II.

*1 Anna, the wife of Joachim mourns her barrenness, 6 is reproached with it by Ju-*

*dith her maid, 9 sits under a laurel tree and prays to the Lord.*

IN the mean time his wife Anna was distressed and perplexed on a double account, and said, I will mourn both for my widowhood and my barrenness.

2 Then drew near a great feast of the Lord, and Judith her maid, said, How long will you thus afflict your soul? The feast of the Lord is now come, when it is unlawful for any one to mourn.

3 Take therefore this hood which was given by one who makes such things, for it is not fit that I, who am a servant should wear it, but it well suits a person of your greater character.

4 But Anna replied, Depart from me, I am not used to such things; besides, the Lord hath greatly humbled me.

5 I fear some ill-designing person hath given thee this, and thou art come to reproach me with my sin.

6 Then Judith her maid answered, what evil shall I wish you, when you will not hearken to me?

7 I cannot wish you a greater curse than you are under, in that God hath shut up your womb, that you should not be a mother in Israel.

8 At this Anna was exceedingly troubled, and having on her wedding garment, went about three o'clock in the afternoon to walk in her garden.

9 And she saw a laurel-tree and sat under it, and prayed unto the Lord, saying,

10 O God of my fathers, bless me and regard my prayer, as thou didst bless the womb of Sarah; and gavest her a son Isaac.

#### CHAPTER III.

*1 Anna perceiving a sparrow's nest in the laurels bemoans her barrenness.*

AND as she was looking towards heaven she perceive a sparrow's nest in the laurel,

2 And mourning within herself, she said, Wo is me, who begat me? and what womb did bear me, that I should be thus accursed before the children of Israel, and that they should reproach and deride me in the temple of my God: Wo is me, to what can I be compared?

3 I am not comparable to the very beasts of the earth, for even the beasts of the earth are fruitful before thee, O Lord! Wo is me, to what can I be compared?

4 I am not compared to the brute animal, for even the brute animals are fruitful before thee, O Lord! Wo is me, to what am I comparable?

5 I cannot be comparable to these waters, for even the waters are fruitful before thee, O Lord! Wo is me, to what can I be compared?

6 I am not comparable to the waves of the sea; for these, whether they are calm, or in motion, with the fishes which are in them, praise thee, O Lord! Wo is me to what can I be compared?

7 I am not comparable to the very earth, for the earth produces its fruits, and praises thee, O Lord!

#### CHAPTER IV.

*1 An Angel appears to Anna and tells her she shall conceive; two angels appear on the same errand. 5 Joachim sacrifices. 8 Anna goes to meet him, 9 rejoicing that she shall conceive.*

THEN an angel of the Lord stood by her and said, Anna, Anna, the Lord hath heard thy prayer; thou shalt conceive and bring forth, and thy progeny shall be spoken of in all the world.

2 And Anna answered, As the Lord my God liveth, whatever I bring

forth, whether it be male or female, I will devote it to the Lord my God and it shall minister to him in holy things, during its whole life.

3 And behold there appeared two angels, saying unto her, Behold Joachim thy husband is coming with his shepherds.

4 For an angel of the Lord hath also come down to him, and said, The Lord God hath heard thy prayer, make haste and go hence, for behold Anna thy wife shall conceive.

5 And Joachim went down and called his shepherds, saying, Bring me hither ten she-lambs without spot or blemish, and they shall be for the Lord my God.

6 And bring me twelve calves without blemish, and the twelve calves shall be for the priests and the elders.

7 Bring me also a hundred goats, and the hundred goats shall be for the whole people.

8 And Joachim went down with the shepherds, and Anna stood by the gate and saw Joachim coming with the shepherds.

9 And she ran, and hanging about his neck, said, Now I know that the Lord hath greatly blessed me:

10 For behold, I who was as a widow am no longer as a widow, and I who was barren shall conceive.

#### CHAPTER V.

*1 Joachim abides the first day in his house but sacrifices on the morrow. 2 Consults the plate on the priests forehead, 3 and is without sin. 6 Anna brings forth a daughter, 9 whom she calls Mary.*

AND Joachim abode the first day in his house, but on the morrow he brought his offerings, and said,

2 If the Lord be propitious to me let the plate which is on the priests forehead make it manifest.

3 And he consulted the plate which the priest wore, and saw it, and behold sin was not found in him.

4 And Joachim said, Now I know that the Lord is propitious to me, and hath taken away all my sins.

5 And he went down from the temple of the Lord justified, and he went to his own house.

6 And when nine months were fulfilled to Anna, she brought forth, and said to the midwife, What have I brought forth?

7 And she told her, A girl.

8 Then Anna said, The Lord hath this day magnified my soul; and she laid her in bed.

9 And when the days of her purification were accomplished, she gave suck to the child; and called her name Mary.

#### CHAPTER VI.

*1 Mary at nine months old, walks nine steps. 3 Anna keeps her holy. 4 When she is a year old, Joachim makes a great feast. 7 Anna gives her the breast, and sings a song to the Lord.*

AND the child increased in strength every day, so that when she was nine months old, her mother put her upon the ground, to try if she could stand; and when she had walked nine steps, she came again to her mother's lap.

2 Then her mother caught her up, and said, As the Lord my God liveth, thou shalt not walk again on this earth, till I bring thee into the temple of the Lord.

3 Accordingly she made her chamber a holy place, and suffered nothing uncommon or unclean to come near her, but invited certain undefiled daughters of Israel, and they drew her aside.

4 But when the child was a year old, Joachim made a great feast, and in-

vited the priests, scribes, elders, and all the people of Israel;

5 And Joachim then made an offering of the girl to the chief-priests, and they blessed her, saying, The God of our fathers bless this girl, and give her a name famous and lasting through all generations. And all the people replied, So be it, Amen:

6 Then Joachim a second time offered her to the priests, and they blessed her, saying, O most high God, regard this girl, and bless her with an everlasting blessing.

7 Upon this her mother took her up, and gave her the breast, and sung the following song to the Lord.

8 I will sing a song unto the Lord my God, for he hath visited me, and taken away from me the reproach of mine enemies, and hath given me the fruit of his righteousness, that it may now be told the sons of Reuben, that Anna gives suck.

9 Then she put the child to rest in the room which she had consecrated, and she went out and ministered unto them.

10 And when the feast was ended, they went away rejoicing, and praising the God of Israel.

#### CHAPTER VII.

*3 Mary being three years old, Joachim causes certain virgins to light each a lamp, and goes with her to the temple. 5 The high-priest places her on the third step of the altar, and sits dances with her feet.*

BUT the girl grew, and when she was two years old, Joachim said to Anna, Let us lead her to the temple of the Lord, that we may perform our vow, which we have vowed unto the Lord God, lest he should be angry with us, and our offering be unacceptable.

2 But Anna said, Let us wait the

third year, lest she should be at a loss to know her father. And Joachim said, Let us then wait.

3 And when the child was three years old, Joachim said, Let us invite the daughters of the Hebrews, who are undefiled, and let them take each a lamp, and let them be lighted, that the child may not turn back again, and her mind be set against the temple of the Lord,

4 And they did thus till they ascended into the temple of the Lord. And the high-priest received her, and blessed her, and said, Mary, the Lord God hath magnified thy name to all generations, and to the very end of time by thee will the Lord shew his redemption to the children of Israel.

5 And he placed her upon the third step of the altar, and the Lord gave unto her grace, and she dance with her feet, and all the house of Israel loved her.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

*2 Mary fed in the temple by angels. 3 When twelve years old the priests consult what to do with her. 6 The angel of the Lord warns Zacharias to call together all the widowers, each bringing a rod. 7 The people meet by sound of trumpet. 8 Joseph throws away his hatchet, and goes to the meeting. 11 A dove comes forth from his rod, and alights on his head. 12 He is chosen to betroth the Virgin, 13 refuses because he is an old man, 14 is compelled, 16 takes her home, and goes to mind his trade of building.*

AND her parents went away filled with wonder, and praising God, because the girl did not return back to them.

2 But Mary continued in the temple as a dove educated there, and received her food from the hand of an angel.

3 And when she was twelve years of

age, the priests met in a council, and said, Behold, Mary is twelve years of age, what shall we do with her, for fear lest the holy place of the Lord our God should be defiled?

4 Then replied the priests to Zacharias the high-priest, Do you stand at the altar of the Lord, and enter into the holy place, and make petitions concerning her, and whatsoever the Lord shall manifest unto you, that do.

5 Then the high-priest entered into the Holy of Holies, and taking away with him the breast-plate of judgment made prayers concerning her;

6 And behold the angel of the Lord came to him, and said, Zacharias, Zacharias, Go forth and call together all the widowers among the people, and let every one of them bring his rod, and he by whom the Lord shall shew a sign shall be the husband of Mary.

7 And the criers went out through all Judaea, and the trumpet of the Lord sounded, and all the people ran and met together.

8 Joseph also throwing away his hatchet, went out to meet them; and when they were met, they went to the high-priest; taking every man his rod.

9 After the high-priest had received their rods, he went into the temple to pray;

10 And when he had finished his prayer, he took the rods, and went forth and distributed them, and there was no miracle attended them.

11 The last rod was taken by Joseph, said behold a dove proceeded out of the rod, and flew upon the head of Joseph.

12 And the high-priest said, Joseph, Thou art the person chosen to take the Virgin of the Lord, to keep her for him:

13 But Joseph refused, saying, I am an old man, and have children, but she is young, and I fear lest I should appear ridiculous in Israel.

14 Then the high-priest replied, Joseph, Fear the Lord thy God, and remember how God dealt with Dathan, Korah, and Abiram, how the earth opened and swallowed them up, because of their contradiction.

15 Now therefore, Joseph, fear God lest the like things should happen in your family.

16 Joseph then being afraid, took her unto his house, and Joseph said unto Mary, Behold, I have taken thee from the temple of the Lord, and now I will leave thee in my house; I must go to mind my trade of building. The Lord be with thee.

#### CHAPTER IX.

*1 The priests desire a new veil for the temple, 3 seven virgins cast lots for making different parts of it, 4 the lot to spin the true purple falls to Mary. 5 Zacharias, the high priest, becomes dumb. 7 Mary takes a pot to draw water, and hears a voice, 8 trembles and begins to work, 9 an angel Appears and salutes her, and tells her she shall conceive by the Holy Ghost, 17 she submits. 19 Visits her cousin Elizabeth, whose child in her womb leaps.*

AND it came to pass, in a council of the priests, it was said, Let us make a new veil for the temple of the Lord.

2 And the high-priest said, Call together to me seven undefiled virgins of the tribe of David.

3 And the servants went and brought them into the temple of the Lord, and the high-priest said unto them, Cast lots before me now, who of you shall spin the golden thread, who the blue, who the scarlet, who the fine linen, and who the true

purple.

4 Then the high-priest knew Mary; that she was of the tribe of David; and he called her, and the true purple fell to her lot to spin, and she went away to her own house.

5 But from that time Zacharias the high-priest became dumb, and Samuel was placed in his room till Zacharias spoke again.

6 But Mary took the true purple; and did spin it.

7 And she took a pot, and went out to draw water, and heard a voice saying unto her, Hail thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee; thou art blessed among women.

8 And she looked round to the right and to the left (to see) whence that voice came, and then trembling went into her house, and laying down the water-pot, she took the purple, and sat down in her seat to work it.

9 And behold the angel of the Lord stood by her, and said, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour in the sight of God.

10 Which when she heard, she reasoned with herself what that sort of salutation meant.

11 And the angel said unto her, The Lord is with thee, and thou shalt conceive:

12 To which she replied, What! shall I conceive by the living God and bring forth as all other women do?

13 But the angel returned answer, Not so, O Mary, but the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee;

14 Wherefore that which shall be born of thee shall be holy, and shall be called the Son of the Living God, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.

15 And behold thy cousin Elizabeth,

she also hath conceived a son in her old age.

16 And this now is the sixth month with her, who was called barren: for nothing is impossible with God.

17 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be unto me according to thy word.

18 And when she had wrought her purple, she carried it to the high-priest, and the high-priest blessed her, saying, Mary, the Lord God hath magnified thy name, and thou shalt be blessed in all the ages of the world.

19 Then Mary, filled with joy, went away to her cousin Elizabeth, and knocked at the door.

20 Which when Elizabeth heard, she ran and opened to her, and blessed her, and said, Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?

21 For lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation reached my ears, that which is in me leaped and blessed thee.

22 But Mary, being ignorant of all those mysterious things which the archangel Gabriel had spoken to her, lifted up her eyes to heaven, and said, Lord! What am I, that all the generations of the earth should call me blessed?

23 But perceiving herself daily to grow big, and being afraid, she went home, and hid herself from the children of Israel; and was fourteen years old when all these things happened.

## CHAPTER X.

*1 Joseph returns from building houses, finds the Virgin grown big, being six months gone with child, 2 is jealous and troubled, 8 reproaches her, 10 she affirms her innocence, 13 he leaves her, 16 determines to dismiss her privately, 17 is*

*warned in a dream that Mary is with child by the Holy Ghost, 20 and glorifies God who had shewn him such favour.*

AND when her sixth month was come, Joseph returned from his building houses abroad, which was his trade, and entering into the house, found the Virgin grown big:

2 Then smiting upon his face, he said, With what face can I look up to the Lord my God? or, what shall I say concerning this young woman?

3 For I received her a Virgin out of the temple of the Lord my God, and have not preserved her such!

4 Who has thus deceived me? Who has committed this evil in my house, and seducing the Virgin from me, hath defiled her?

5 Is not the history of Adam exactly accomplished in me?

6 For in the very instant of his glory, the serpent came and found Eve alone, and seduced her.

7 Just after the same manner it has happened to me.

8 Then Joseph arising from the ground, called her, and said, O thou who hast been so much favoured by God, why hast thou done this?

9 Why hast thou thus debased thy soul, who wast educated in the Holy of Holies, and received thy food from the hand of angels?

10 But she, with a flood of tears, replied, I am innocent, and have known no man.

11 Then said Joseph, How comes it to pass you are with child?

12 Mary answered, As the Lord my God liveth, I know not by what means.

13 Then Joseph was exceedingly afraid, and went ay from her, considering what he should do with her; and he thus reasoned with himself:

14 If I conceal her crime, I shall be found guilty by the law of the Lord;

15 And if I discover her to the children of Israel, I fear, lest she being with child by an angel, I shall be found to betray the life of an innocent person.

16 What therefore shall I do? I will privately dismiss her.

17 Then the night was come upon him, when behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said,

18 Be not afraid to take that young woman, for that which is within her is of the Holy Ghost,

19 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

20 Then Joseph arose from his sleep, and glorified the God of Israel, who had shewn him such favour, and preserved the Virgin.

## CHAPTER XI.

*3 Annas visits Joseph, perceives the Virgin big with child, 4 informs the high priest that Joseph had privately married her. 8 Joseph and Mary brought to trial on the charge. 17 Joseph drinks the water of the Lord as an ordeal, and receiving no harm, returns home.*

THEN came Annas the scribe, and said to Joseph, Wherefore have we not seen you since your return?

2 And Joseph replied, Because I was weary after my journey, and rested the first day.

3 But Annas turning about perceived the Virgin big with child.

4 And went away to the priest, and told him, Joseph in whom you placed so much confidence, is guilty of a notorious crime, in that he hath defiled the Virgin whom he received out of the temple of the Lord, and hath privately married her, not discovering it to the children of Israel.

5 Then said the priest, Hath Joseph

done this?

6 Annas replied, If you send any of your servants you will find that she is with child.

7 And the servants went, and found it as he said.

8 Upon this both she and Joseph were brought to their trial, and the priest said unto her, Mary, what hast thou done?

9 Why hast thou debased thy soul, and forgot thy God, seeing thou wast brought up in the Holy of Holies, and didst receive thy food from the hands of angels, and heardest their songs?

10 Why hast thou done this?

11 To which with a flood of tears she answered, As the Lord my God liveth, I am innocent in his sight, seeing I know no man.

12 Then the priest said to Joseph, Why hast thou done this?

13 And Joseph answered, As the Lord my God liveth, I have not been concerned with her.

14 But the priest said, Lie not, but declare the truth; thou hast privately married her, and not discovered it to the children of Israel, and humbled thyself under the mighty hand (of God), that thy seed might be blessed:

15 And Joseph was silent.

16 Then said the priest (to Joseph), You must restore to the temple of the Lord the Virgin which you took thence.

17 But he wept bitterly, and the priest added, I will cause you both to drink the water of the Lord, which is for trial, and so your iniquity shall be laid open before you.—[bitter water that causeth the curse]

18 Then the priest took the water, and made Joseph drink, and sent him to a mountainous place,

19 And he returned perfectly well, and all the people wondered that his

guilt was not discovered.

20 So the priest said, Since the Lord hath not made your sins evident, neither do I condemn you.

21 So he sent them away.

22 Then Joseph took Mary, and went to his house, rejoicing and praising the God of Israel.

## CHAPTER XII.

*1 A decree from Augustus for taxing the Jews. 5 Joseph puts Mary on an ass, to return to Bethlehem, 6 she looks sorrowful, 7 she laughs, 8 Joseph inquires the cause of each, 9 she tells him she sees two persons, one mourning and the other rejoicing. 10 The delivery being near, he takes her from the ass, and places her in a cave.*

AND it came to pass, that there went forth a decree from the Emperor Augustus, that all the Jews should be taxed, who were of Bethlehem in Judaea.

2 And Joseph said, I will take care that my children be taxed; but what shall I do with this young woman?

3 To have her taxed as my wife I am ashamed; and if I tax her as my daughter, all Israel knows she is not my daughter.

4 When the time of the Lord's appointment shall come, let him do as seems good to him.

5 And he saddled the ass, and put her upon it, and Joseph and Simon followed after her, and arrived at Bethlehem within three miles.

6 Then Joseph turning about saw Mary sorrowful, and said within himself, Perhaps she is in pain through that which is within her.

7 But when he turned about again, he saw her laughing, and said to her,

8 Mary, how happens it, that I sometimes see sorrow, and sometimes laughter and joy in thy countenance?



9 And Mary replied to him, I see two people with mine eyes, the one weeping and mourning, the other laughing and rejoicing.

10 And he went again across the way, and Mary said to Joseph, Take me down from the ass, for that which is in me presses to come forth.

11 But Joseph replied, Whither shall I take thee? for the place is a desert.

12 Then said Mary again to Joseph, take me down, for that which is within me mightily presses me.

13 And Joseph took her down.

14 And he found there a cave, and let her into it.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

*1 Joseph seeks a Hebrew midwife, 2 perceives the owls stopping in their flight, 3 the working people at their food not moving, 8 the sheep standing still, 9 the shepherd fixed and immovable, 10 and kids with their mouths touching the water but not drinking.*

AND leaving her and his sons in the cave, Joseph went forth to seek a Hebrew midwife in the village of Bethlehem.

2 But as I was going (said Joseph), I looked up into the air, and I saw the clouds astonished, and the fowls of the air stopping in the midst of their flight.

3 And I looked down towards the earth, and saw a table spread, and working people sitting around it, but their hands were upon the table and they did not move to eat.

4 They who had meat in their mouths did not eat.

5 They who lifted their hands up to their heads did not draw them back,

6 And they who lifted them up to their mouths did not put any thing in;

7 But all their faces were fixed up-

wards.

8 And I beheld the sheep dispersed, and yet the sheep stood still.

9 And the shepherd lifted up his hand to smite them, and his hand continued up.

10 And I looked unto a river, and saw the kids with their mouths close to the water, and touching it, but they did not drink.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

*1 Joseph finds a midwife. 10 A bright cloud overshadows the cave. 11 A great light in the cave, gradually increases until the infant is born. 13 The mid-wife goes out, and tells Salome that she has seen a virgin bring forth. 17 Salome doubts it. 20 her hand withers, 22 she supplicates the Lord, 28 is cured, 30 but warned not to declare what she had seen.*

THEN I beheld a woman coming down from the mountains, and she said to me, Where art thou going, O man?

2 And I said to her, I go to enquire for a Hebrew midwife.

3 She replied to me, Where is the woman that is to be delivered?

4 And I answered, In the cave, and she is betrothed to me.

5 Then said the midwife, Is she not thy wife?

6 Joseph answered, It is Mary, who was educated in the Holy of Holies, in the house of the Lord, and she fell to me by lot, and is not my wife, but has conceived by the Holy Ghost.

7 The midwife said, Is this true?

8 He answered, Come and see.

9 And the midwife went along with him, and stood in the cave.

10 Then a bright cloud overshadowed the cave, and the mid-wife said, This day my soul is magnified, for mine eyes have seen surprising things, and salvation is brought forth

to Israel.

11 But on a sudden the cloud became a great light in the cave, so that their eyes could not bear it.

12 But the light gradually decreased, until the infant appeared, and sucked the breast of his mother, Mary.

13 Then the midwife cried out, and said, How glorious a day is this, wherein mine eyes have seen this extraordinary sight!

14 And the midwife went out from the cave, and Salome met her.

15 And the midwife said to her, Salome, Salome, I will tell you a most surprising thing which I saw,

16 A virgin hath brought forth, which is a thing contrary to nature.

17 To which Salome replied, As the Lord my God liveth unless I receive particular proof of this matter, I will not believe that a virgin hath brought forth.

18 If Then Salome went in, and the midwife said, Mary, shew thyself, for a controversy is risen concerning thee.

19 And Salome received satisfaction.

20 But her hand was withered, and she groaned bitterly;

21 And said, Woe to me, because of mine iniquity; for I have tempted the living God, and my hand is ready to drop off.

22 Then Salome made her supplication to the Lord, and said, O God of my Fathers, remember me, for I am of the seed of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

23 Make me not a reproach among the children of Israel, but restore me sound to my parents.

24 For thou well knowest, O Lord, that I have performed many offices of charity in thy name, and have received my reward from thee.

25 Upon this an angel of the Lord stood by Salome, and said, The Lord

God hath heard thy prayer, reach forth thy hand to the child, and carry him, and by that means thou shalt be restored.

26 Salome filled with exceeding joy, went to the child, and said, I will touch him.

27 And she purposed to worship him, for she said, This is a great king, which is born in Israel.

28 And straightway Salome was cured.

29 Then the midwife went out of the cave, being approved by God.

30 And lo! a voice came to Salome. Declare not the strange things which thou hast seen, till the child shall come to Jerusalem.

31 So Salome also departed, approved by God.

#### CHAPTER XV.

*1 Wise men come from the east. 3 Herod alarmed; 8 desires them if they find the child to bring him word. 10 They visit the cave and offer the child their treasure, 11 and being warned in a dream, do not return to Herod, but go home another way.*

THEN Joseph was preparing to go away, because there arose a great disorder in Bethlehem by the coming of some wise men from the east,

2 Who said, Where is the King of the Jews born? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When Herod heard this, he was exceedingly troubled, and sent messengers to the wise men, and to the priests, and enquired of them in the town-hall,

4 And said unto them, Where have you it written concerning Christ the king, or where should he be born?

5 Then they say unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea; for thus it is written: And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art not the least among the

princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a ruler, who shall rule my people Israel.

6 And having sent away the chief priests, he enquired of the wise men in the town-hall, and said unto them, What sign was it ye saw concerning the king that is born?

7 They answered him, We saw an extraordinary large star shining among the stars of heaven, and so outshined all the other stars, as that they became not visible, and we knew thereby that a great king was born in Israel, and therefore we are come to worship him.

8 Then said Herod to them, Go and make diligent inquiry; and if ye find the child, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 So the wise men went forth, and behold, the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over the cave where the young child was with Mary his mother.

10 Then they brought forth out of their treasures, and offered unto him gold and frankincense, and myrrh.

11 And being warned in a dream by an angel, that they should not return to Herod through Judaea, they departed into their own country by another way.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

*1 Herod enraged, orders the infants in Bethlehem to be slain. 2 Mary puts her infant in an ox-manger. 3 Elizabeth flees with her son John to the mountains. 6 A mountain miraculously divides and receives them. 9 Herod incensed at the escape of John, causes Zacharias to be murdered at the altar. 23 The roofs of the temple rent, the body miraculously conveyed, and the blood petrified. 25 Israel mourns for him. 27 Simeon chosen his successor by lot.*

THEN Herod perceiving that he was mocked by the wise men, and being very angry, commanded certain men to go and to kill all the children that were in Bethlehem, from two years old and under.

2 But Mary hearing that the children were to be, killed, being under much fear, took the child, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in an ox-manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

3 Elizabeth also, hearing that her son John was about to be searched for; took him and went up unto the mountains, and looked around for a place to hide him;

4 And there was no secret place to be found.

5 Then she groaned within herself, and said, O mountain of the Lord, receive the mother with the child.

6 For Elizabeth could not climb up,

7 And instantly the mountain was divided and received them.

8 And there appeared to them an angel of the Lord to preserve them.

9 But Herod made search after John, and sent servants to Zacharias, when he was (ministering) at the altar, and said unto him, Were hast thou hid thy son?

10 He replied, to them, I am a minister of God, and a servant at the altar: how should I know where my son is?

11 So the servants went back, and told Herod the whole; at which he was incensed, and said, Is not this son of his like to be king of Israel?

12 He sent therefore again his servants to Zacharias, saying, Tell us the truth, where is thy son, for you know that your life is in my hand.

13 So the servants went and told him all this:

14 But Zacharias replied to them, I am a martyr for God, and if ye skied

my blood, the Lord will receive my soul.

**15** Besides know that ye shed innocent blood.

**16** However Zacharias was murdered in the entrance of the temple said altar, and about the partition;

**17** But the children of Israel knew not when he was killed.

**18** Then at the hour of salutation the priests went into the temple but Zacharias did not according to custom, meet them and bless them.

**19** Yet they still continued waiting for him to salute them;

**20** And when they found he did not in a long time come, one of them ventured into the holy place where the altar was, and he saw blood lying upon the ground congealed:

**21** When, behold, a voice from heaven said, Zacharias is murdered, and his blood shall not be wiped away, until the revenger of his blood come.

**22** But when he heard this, he was afraid; and went forth and told the priests what he had seen and heard; and they all went in, and saw the fact.

**23** Then the roofs of the temple

howled, and were rent from the top to the bottom:

**24** And they could not find the body, but only blood made hard like stone.

**25** And they went away, and told the people, that Zacharias was murdered, and all the tribes of Israel heard thereof, and mourned for him, and lamented three days:

**26** Then the priests took council together concerning a person to succeed him.

**27** And Simeon and the other priests cast lots, and the lot fell upon Simeon.

**28** For he had been assured by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die, till he had seen Christ come in the flesh. (I James wrote this History in Jerusalem: and when the disturbance was I retired into a desert place, until the death of Herod, and the disturbances ceased at Jerusalem. That which remains is, that I glorify God that he hath given me such wisdom to write unto you who are spiritual, and who love God: to whom (be ascribed) glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.)

#### THE PROTEVANGELION.

Note on the death of Zacharias in, Chap. 16. There is a story both in the Jerusalem and Babylonish Talmud very similar to this. It is cited by Dr. Lightfoot, Talmud, Hierosol, in Taanith, fol. 69; and Talmud. Babyl. in Sanhedr., fol. 96. "O Rabbi Jochanan said, Eighty thousand priests were slain for the blood of Zacharias. Rabbi Judas asked Rabbi Achan, Where did they kill Zacharias? Was it in the woman's court, or in the court of Israel? He answered, Neither in the court of Israel, nor in the court of women, but in the court of the priests; and they did not treat his blood in the same manner as they were wont to treat the blood of a ram or young goat. For of these it is written, He shall pour out his blood, and cover it with dust. But it is written here, The blood is in the midst of her: she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground. (Ezek. xxiv.

7.) But why was this? That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance:

I have set his blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered. They committed seven evils that day: they murdered a priest, a prophet, and a king; they shed the blood of the innocent they polluted the court: that day was the Sabbath: and the day of expiation. When therefore Nebuzaradan came there (viz. to Jerusalem,) he saw his blood bubbling, and said to them, What meaneth this? They answered, It is the blood of calves, lambs, and rams, which we have offered upon the altar. He commanded then, that they should bring calves, and lambs, and rams, and said I will try whether this be their blood: accordingly they brought and slew them, but the blood of Zacharias still bubbled, but the blood of these did not bubble. Then he said, Declare to me the truth of this matter, or else I will comb your flesh with iron combs. Then said they to him, He was a priest, prophet, and judge, who prophesied to Israel all these calamities which we have suffered from you; but we arose against him, and slew him. Then, said he, I will appease him then he took the rabbins and slew them upon his (viz. Zacharias's) blood, and he was not yet appeased. Next he took the young boys from the schools, and slew them upon his blood; and yet it bubbled. Then he brought the young priests and slew them in the-same place, and yet it still bubbled. So he slew at length ninety-four thousand persons upon his blood, and it did not as yet cease bubbling, then he drew near to it, and said, O Zacharias, Zacharias, thou halt occasioned the death of the chief of thy countrymen, shall I slay them all? then the blood ceased, and did bubble no more."

